

Health of Home and School.

LEAFLET NO. 36.

ISSUED BY THE STATE BOARD OF HEALTH OF MAINE.

Bad Shoes and Inefficiency.

Many horses are lamed and of little value on account of unintelligent shoeing, and it is equally true that many men and women suffer much and are put upon a lower plane of efficiency because they persist in the use of shoes which change the shape of their feet from the natural to unshapely or crippling forms. The human foot may be weakened, lamed and rendered less serviceable by wrong habits in standing and walking as well as by faulty shoes.

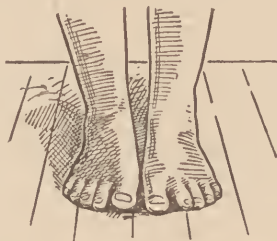


FIG. 1.

The Perfect Foot.

With very few exceptions every child has feet shaped like those in Fig. 1 unless they have been spoiled by ill-treatment. The child of to-day comes into the world with a foot shaped just like that of the baby of a thousand years ago, and the foot of the grown up person of to-day should be just as sharply as was the human foot shown in the statuary of the classic ages of the sculptor's art, if it has not been spoiled by modern shoes. The foot of the adult should have a shape like that shown in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3.



FIG. 2.



FIG. 3.



FIG. 4.

The most common deviation of the foot from its natural shape is that in which the great toe has, from its normal line pointing straight ahead, been turned outward so as to press upon the other toes. That is usually the first bad result of wearing ill-fitting shoes, and it is very often the beginning of a vicious circle of foot troubles which include a narrowing of the fore part of the foot and a weakening of its locomotive power; a tendency to assume a faulty gait in walking and faulty postures in standing; and these in turn weaken the arch of the foot and tend to flat-foot; and in turn

again accentuate or fix the habit of the awkward and unnatural gait. These are some, but not all, of the ills which come from having the feet misshapen by faulty shoes.

How to Walk.

In the gait which is naturally taken by the person whose feet are unspoiled and who is properly shod, each foot as it does its part in walking, acts as follows:

The heel as the foot is swung forward is the part which first touches the ground. It touches the ground lightly for the instant until the weight of the body is transferred to the ball of the foot and the outer, lower edge of the sole. The third and final stage in the action of the foot is a propulsive movement given by the toes and more forcibly by the great toe as they leave the ground.

The imprint of the unclad normal foot upon a level surface shows that the weight of the body, whether in standing or walking, is borne by the heel, the ball of the foot, and the outer and lower portion of the arch of the foot. In the deformity of the foot which is caused by shoes which are narrow at the toe or curved outward at the inner and front part of the shoe, there is a tendency to toe out in walking and this throws the weight more than is natural upon the inner portion of the arch of the foot, the part which is not so well able to bear the strain.

But, if the foot is natural, the great toe, will and should point straight forward as shown in Fig. 2, and the person will not have the awkward toeing-out gait shown in Fig. 4. The straight forward direction of the toe in walking is nowadays more and more insisted upon as correct and good form. The toeing-out habit and the toeing-out track indicates a foot which has been distorted or weakened.